IN THE CLAIMS

Please amend the claims to read as follows:

1. (Currently Amended) A commerce management method for automatically managing agreements including at least one contingency ~~or more contingencies~~, said method comprising ~~the steps of~~:

    a) logging at least one condition for an agreement and identifying at least one potential response as indicating satisfaction of said at least one condition and at least one milestone for each said potential response;

    b) retrieving information related to responses to each condition from predetermined independent sources when the milestone corresponding to a response is reached;

    c) checking said retrieved information to determine whether said agreement is determinate; and

    d) notifying contracting parties when said agreement is determined to be determinate.

4. (Currently Amended). ~~A commerce management method as in claim 1, wherein the retrieving step (b) comprises automatically retrieving information from previously identified remotely connected locations~~ A computer program product as in claim 16, wherein said retrieved information includes at least one of: consumer's price index (CPI), prime lending rate (Prime), a currency exchange rate, a bond interest rate, a raw material price, a weather forecast, auction results, election results, and ballot proposition results.

9. (Previously Presented) A commerce management method as in claim 1, wherein the step (d) of notifying the parties, notifies parties that the contract has failed when a response to a condition indicates said condition cannot be satisfied.

10. (Currently Amended) A commerce management method as in claim 1, wherein ~~the step (d) of notifying the parties, notifies parties that the contract is determinate when identified satisfying responses have been received for each said condition~~ said retrieved information includes a mortgage rate.

12. (CurrentlyAmended) An automated commerce management system comprising:

a plurality of remotely connected terminals, contracting parties entering information about contract conditions in said terminals;

a storage maintaining a contingency agreement database, said contingency agreement database including contracting party information and condition information on a plurality of agreements, said condition information including:

at least one ~~or more~~ potential ~~responses~~ response satisfying each condition, and at least one ~~or more milestones~~ milestone for each said potential response; and

an automatic data retriever retrieving condition response information from predetermined independent sources via at least one ~~or more~~ remotely connected ~~computers~~ computer when the milestone corresponding to a response is reached.

13. (Currently Amended) A commerce management system as in claim 12, further comprising:

an automatic mailer notifying contracting parties ~~when~~ a corresponding agreement ~~is determinate~~ has failed when a response to a condition indicates said condition cannot be satisfied.

15. (Currently Amended) A commerce management system as in claim 12 ~~13~~ wherein said ~~automatic mailer sends electronic mail (e-mail) to parties identified by an e-mail address~~ retrieved information includes a mortgage rate.

16. (Currently Amended) A computer program product for automated commerce management, said computer program product comprising a computer usable medium having computer readable program code thereon, said computer readable program code comprising:

      computer readable program code means for logging conditions for agreements and for each logged condition identifying at least one potential response as indicating satisfaction and at least one milestone for each said potential response;

      computer readable program code means for retrieving information related to responses to each condition from predetermined independent sources when the milestone corresponding to a response is reached;

      computer readable program code means for checking said retrieved information to determine whether said agreement is determinate; and

      computer readable program code means for notifying contracting parties when said agreements is determinate.

21. (Currently Amended) A commerce management method as in claim 1 [[4]], wherein said retrieved information includes at least one of: consumer's price index (CPI), prime lending rate (Prime), a mortgage rate, a currency exchange rate, a bond interest rate, a raw material price, a weather forecast, auction results, election results, and ballot proposition results.

22. (Currently Amended) A commerce management system as in claim 12, wherein said condition response information includes at least one of: consumer's price index (CPI), prime lending rate (Prime), a mortgage rate, a currency exchange rate, a bond interest rate, a raw material price, a weather forecast, auction results, election results, and ballot proposition results.